

## Online training helps employees boost accessibility

Two people approach you. One may be a person with a disability and doesn't speak. The other may be there to help the person with a disability – you're not sure – and asks you a question on their behalf. How should you react? Should you answer the person who asked the question or talk to the person with the disability directly?

Not sure? Afraid of making an embarrassing mistake? You're not alone. Most people need a little help understanding the principles and protocols that will make George Brown a truly accessible place for everyone, according to Olga Dosis, the college's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) Act co-ordinator.

Hundreds of George Brown employees already know how to handle this situation with grace because they've spent 20 minutes online doing a training module that guides them through this and other common customer service scenarios. (The correct answer is at the end of this article.)

Dosis, who is co-ordinating the college's current effort to meet the demands of provincial AODA legislation, wants the rest of college employees to go through similar training soon.

George Brown is already a leader in AODA compliance – having partnered with with Algonquin College in Ottawa to create the on-line training modules – that have made it easy and fast for a large percentage of employees to be trained when it's convenient for them. But Dosis wants all employees go online soon to be trained with the module designed for their employee group. "The goal is to have everyone trained," she says. "We must report back on whether our current employees and volunteers have completed training to the Ministry in March 2010". Then there will be annual reporting on this item.

Employees can access this training in three ways:

- On Insite – by selecting AODA located at the top right hand corner under "Top Links".
- On the AODA website – by selecting one of the AODA Customer Service Training Modules at <http://www.georgebrown.ca/AODA/training.aspx>
- Or completing a training manual also located on the AODA website.

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Brenda Neptune (left) of the St. James Student Service Centre exchanges written messages with a potential student using a desktop two-person instant messaging device, called a Ubi Duo. Five Ubi Duo's have been put in high traffic front line offices around the college to enable easy communication between employees and people with disabilities who cannot speak, speak clearly enough to be understood, or who are more comfortable writing. The machines are part of a college effort to be welcoming and accessible to everyone and meet the demands of provincial Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Training for employees in customer service for people with disabilities is available online.

## College commits \$42,000 to greening projects

Children in the Casa Loma Child Care Centre will have a garden to play in, students and employees will more easily fill their refillable water bottles, and George Brown will use fewer cleaning chemicals thanks to the college's Green Fund.

Now in its second year, \$42,000 from the fund has approved for four projects that advance the College's objectives for reducing its environmental impacts.

The funded projects were chosen from a wide range of submissions by students, and employees. "We were impressed by the quality of the submissions we received this year; they illustrated the creativity that is out there with innovative ideas for reducing the College's eco-footprint", says Eugene Harrigan, Vice-President of Corporate Services said.

The following projects were funded:

### Water Fountain Retrofit Project

Sponsors: Student Association in collaboration with the Facilities Management Department.

Purpose: In an effort to decrease the amount of disposable water bottles used on campus and to raise awareness about the health and environmental impacts of disposable bottled water consumption, the Student Association successfully submitted a proposal to upgrade water fountains by installing water spouts for easier refilling of reusable water containers. This initiative also corresponds with the Student Association's goal of eliminating plastic water bottles entirely at George Brown.

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## Greening projects

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### Casa Loma Child Care Playground Greening Project

Sponsor: Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Purpose: Working in partnership with a landscape architect from the Evergreen Foundation, an environmentally sustainable design will be developed for the playground at the Casa Loma Child Care Centre. Working with the landscape architect, the design team will consist of childcare staff, facilities staff, parents and community members and the process will focus on improving the site through various green elements and greening opportunities for the children. This project will enhance the outdoor playground with gardens, vegetable plantings and other environmental elements that will be visible to all who enter the Casa Loma Campus via the main stairway. As the greening process is documented and photographed, this material can also be used in several courses in the ECE program to teach students about how to create spaces that are healthy places to play, learn and where children can develop a genuine appreciation and respect for nature.

### Steam Cleaning Systems

Sponsor: Facilities Management Department

Purpose: Two new Steam King Vapour Cleaning Systems will be purchased for housekeeping and custodial teams. The steam cleaning processes and techniques are extremely "green" because they avoid the use of hazardous cleaning chemicals and disinfectants. Steam cleans and disinfects because "organic matter and micro-organisms cannot survive the heat". Steam is effective for cleaning hard surfaces such as floors, walls, counters and tables/desks as well as very effective for more difficult jobs such as baseboards, crevices such as elevator tracks, cracks, corners and kick plates and baseboards. Steam also cleans tough stains on draperies, tablecloths, clothing, upholstered furniture, blinds and carpet stains—the soft surfaces.

### "Pink Dentures with Green Technology"

Sponsors: School of Dental Health in collaboration with the Mechanical/Structural Engineering Department, CCET, and the Office of Research and Innovation

Purpose: Acrylic resin, used in the process of creating dentures, will be processed using solar energy in a solar powered acrylizer (proposed to be designed and manufactured at George Brown). As a corollary to the project, a "wax-back program" supported by the Office of Research and Innovation, will be using solar powered equipment to recycle pre-clinical/laboratory waste wax collected from the students, thus reducing the amount of non-biodegradable waste generated by the college. Recycling is done only for the non-clinical (not used with patients) and lab wax.



**STUDENT APPRECIATION DAY** — Casa Loma students line up to get a free slice of pizza and a soft drink as part of Student Appreciation Days at the college in late January. The days, which also featured a contest designed to familiarize students with college services, were sponsored by the Student Support and Campus Life department.



**CAREER CENTRE OPENS AT ST. JAMES** — Career Advisor David Hurlburt looks over a resume with Human Resources student Bethel Nussia in the newly opened Career Centre at St. James Campus. In addition to one-on-one sessions with career advisors, the Centre offers resources and workshops in job search techniques as well as student success strategies. The Centre is located on the lower level of 200 King St. E. and is part of the Student Service Centre. For information go to [www.georgebrown.ca/saffairs](http://www.georgebrown.ca/saffairs).

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Employees that complete training are rewarded with a handsome certificate.

George Brown is also demonstrating leadership in accessibility on other fronts, such as pulling together resources so that we know how to make course materials available in accessible formats and adding instant messaging technology (Ubi Duo's) to several public access points so that people with disabilities have an option to communicate in text if they require to. This technology is instant texting and the devices have been well received by our students who have used them. So, well received—that other Colleges and Universities are considering such technology.

A growing percentage of the population of Ontario — including George Brown employees, students and potential students — has a disability of some type, says Dosis. Some are readily visible, and some are invisible. According to Ontario statistics this number will increase to 1 in 5 over the next 20 years.

So how would you properly handle the scenario at beginning of this article? Here's what you'll learn in the online training that deals with support people: "If you are not sure which person is the support person, simply ask. Always speak directly to the person with the disability and not the support person."

For information contact Olga Dosis, AODA Coordinator at [odosis@georgebrown.ca](mailto:odosis@georgebrown.ca), ext. 4610.

# Theatre students learn from legendary director Christopher Newton

To see the work of renowned theatre actor and director Christopher Newton you usually have to make the trek to Stratford or Niagara-on-the-Lake for the Shaw Festival. Now all you need is a short streetcar ride.

Newton is directing George Brown's Theatre's production of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Young Centre in the Distillery District in February.

Working with one of the best directors in the country is a resume-building treat for the class of third-year students who make up the play's cast. "It's a dream come true," says student Justin Goodhand, who plays King Ferdinand of Navarre in the production. "In 50 years I'll be able to talk about being in the room with Christopher Newton and it will mean something."

While it was intimidating at first to work with a director of such stature – who is used to directing Canada's most talented and experienced professional actors – the cast soon relaxed. "He's very patient, very generous," says Goodhand, "He's in really interested in how you work, and you the actor and the person." While Newton makes suggestions to the students about the way they play particular scenes or say particular lines, he doesn't dictate. "He'll always defer to your judgment – the actor's judgment," says Goodhand.

George Brown is perfect for Newton as he's interested in exploring how a group of actors work together. While most theatres bring actors together to work on a single play, George Brown students have been working together as a group for almost three years on multiple projects. "We have become a company," says Goodhand.

Born in England, Newton worked as an actor across Canada, including three seasons with the Stratford Festival. In 1979, he accepted an appointment as Artistic Director of the Shaw Festival, a position held until 2002. During his tenure, Newton worked to expand and enrich the Shaw Festival's repertory company and directed many critically acclaimed productions, including: George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1983), *Heartbreak House* (1985), *Major Barbara* (1987), *Man and Superman* (1989), *Misalliance* (1990), *Pygmalion* (1992), *Candida* (1993), *You Never Can Tell* (1995), and Henry Arthur Jones's *The Silver King*, among many others.

Since his departure from the Shaw, Mr Newton has worked as a freelance director and actor for companies such as the Canadian Opera Company, the Vancouver Playhouse, and Theatre Calgary.

*Love's Labour's Lost*, which runs from Feb. 10 to 20, is George Brown Theatre's second showcase production of the 2009/2010 season. It is often thought of as Shakespeare's most flamboyantly intellectual play, as it abounds in sophisticated wordplay, puns,



Renowned Canadian stage actor and director Christopher Newton watches George Brown theatre student James Pettitt rehearse a scene from the current George Brown Theatre production of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. This is the first time Newton, a longtime veteran of Stratford and Shaw Festivals, has directed a George Brown production. The play runs at the Young Centre from Feb. 10 to 20.

and literary allusions. It opens with the King of Navarre and three noble companions, Berowne, Dumaine, and Longaville, taking an oath to devote themselves to three years of study, promising not to give in to the company of women. However, when the Princess of France and her three lovely companions arrive, their oath gives way to flirtation and the blush of first love.

Tickets are available at the Young Centre box office by calling (416) 866-8666.

## Special Dinner/Theatre Offer

You'll get George Brown's best from two Centres with an exclusive dinnertheatre offer. For as low as \$54 (not including drinks, gratuities and taxes) you can enjoy a special pre-theatre dinner at The Chefs' House with an early 5:30 p.m. seating, followed by *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Young Centre. For details and booking go to [www.georgebrown.ca/theatre](http://www.georgebrown.ca/theatre).



**FURNITURE FROM A MASTER OF MODERN** – An exhibition of modernist furniture created by architect and designer Eero Saarinen is now at School of Design (230 Richmond Street East, side entrance). The exhibition includes archival pieces from the Knoll Museum in East Greenville, PA, and the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI, as well as furniture currently in production by sponsor and curator Knoll, the furniture maker. The exhibition also explores Saarinen's many furniture designs, created in the 1950s for Knoll and still produced today by the company. These revolutionary designs continue to be extraordinarily influential works of art and have since been acquired by numerous institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art in New York. The exhibition will be open to the public until February 20.

# President Anne Sado



George Brown's extensive links to employers have long been a source of advantage and opportunity for the college and its students. As we look to the future, sustaining and enhancing our understanding of employment so that our students may reap benefits requires George Brown to actively participate in areas where employers are seeking to grow.

One such area, which the province has already identified as crucial to future employment opportunities, is research and commercialization. The Ministry of Research and Innovation has been pursuing a number of strategies aimed at developing a competitive research sector through its Ontario Research Commercialization Program (ORCP) launched in 2005. As part of this initiative, the ORCP attempts to facilitate the transfer of technology or scientific discovery from post-secondary and research institutions to the private sector, where business knowledge and skills can further develop them into new marketable products or services. As a post-

secondary institution with a deep understanding of employers' needs, George Brown is in a unique position to contribute to the research commercialization process.

Since we are a college and not a university, our expertise naturally falls in the applied research area as opposed to "pure" or academic research. This is the type of research conducted with business outcomes in mind, and is the type of research necessary for Canada to evolve its current economy into a much more innovation-based economy in order to stay competitive well into the future. In my roles both as President of George Brown and as a member on the Board of Directors for the Toronto Region Research Alliance, industry stakeholders have told me that research commercialization is vital to them from a competitive standpoint. This, along with the important opportunities that applied research in a college setting brings to students, is why we established our own Applied and Institutional Research department in 2006.

For students, the benefits of developing applied research skills are many. When students work on applied research projects they gain the entrepreneurial creativity and problem-solving skills that add value in the workplace in addition to the job skills acquired from applied learning programs. Already, George Brown students are collaborating with industry partners on a number of innovative projects, from designing an online diabetes portal for St. Michael's Hospital that includes a game to educate patients, to

re-building a heritage site using state-of-the-art green architectural tools and practices.

Simply understanding the stages and process of innovation will allow students to be better prepared to contribute to employers from day one. By augmenting George Brown's applied research capability, we maintain our advantage in understanding employment and ultimately give our students a tangible advantage in the eyes of employers.

Because applied research actually brings together and supports the college's other major strategic elements such as interprofessional

education (when research teams are comprised of students from different programs, for instance) and our commitment to industry partnerships, building our research capability will be a significant part of our strategic framework for 2020. Indeed, as our economy continues to undergo major transformations, our ability to support innovation may soon become one of the most important parts of understanding employment.

I encourage you to find out more about our research and innovation initiatives by visiting our website: [www.georgebrown.ca/research](http://www.georgebrown.ca/research)

## GREEN SPOT

Garbage cans are relics from a bygone era –  
the time before recycling.  
But they still haunt some George Brown hallways  
and classrooms, silently encouraging people to  
toss everything in their wide mouths.  
You'll feel better – and it's better for the world –  
to give these still voracious relics the cold shoulder  
and find a nearby grey recycling bin.  
Please encourage our students  
to do the same.



**Make it happen.**

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